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*Présidence luxembourgeoise  
du Conseil de l'Union européenne*

**Permanent Council No 559  
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### **EU STATEMENT ON TAJIKISTAN**

The European Union has taken note of the OSCE/ODIHR report on the parliamentary elections held in Tajikistan on 27 February and 13 March 2005 which was issued on 31 May. We take this opportunity to re-iterate our readiness to assist the Tajik authorities in implementing the recommendations of the Election Observation Mission in close co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe and ODIHR as well as other OSCE institutions.

The report highlights that the election campaign was subdued, with almost no genuine debate. International NGOs working on democracy and good governance faced bureaucratic difficulties or criticism in carrying out their work. The authorities prevented several independent newspapers from publishing. On Election Day, OSCE/ODIHR observers noted that elections fell short of international standards in many key areas, for example identity checks of voters, access for observers and procedures for vote counting.

The European Union is convinced that efforts aimed at strengthening a vibrant multi party system which would allow all citizens, all candidates and voters, to freely present and discuss their views will be key in laying ground for a stable democratic development in Tajikistan. In this regard we are aware of the current trial of Rustam Fayziev, Deputy Chairman of the unregistered Taraqqiot Party, which is taking place behind closed doors. We call for transparency and further information in this case. In this context, the EU would like to recall its statement of 12 May 2005 in which we asked for further information also on the case of Mr. Iskandarov, Chairman of the Democratic Party.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia<sup>1</sup>, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

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<sup>1</sup>Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process